

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ANKARA 02643 031114Z

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8642

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 2643

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EE.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TU

SUBJECT: POPPY CONTROL PROGRAM

1. DONALD COHEN (S/NM) AND EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED APRIL 1 ON HALIL DAG, MFA'S PRINCIPAL ACTION OFFICER FOR NARCOTICS AFFAIRS. FOLLOWING WERE THE MAJOR POINTS WHICH EMERGED DURING THE DISCUSSION:

A. CONTROL PROGRAM. THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IS PROCEEDING WITH PLANS TO IMPLEMENT A SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM IN THE POPPY REGION. CURRENT PLANS CALL FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF 75 INSPECTION TEAMS, EACH CONSISTING OF FIVE MEN, AT LEAST ONE OF WHOM MUST BE FROM THE JANDARMA OR TURKISH NATIONAL POLICE. (THE OTHER MEMBERS WOULD BE AGRICULTURAL SPECIALISTS FROM THE SOIL PRODUCTS OFFICE.) THESE TEAMS WOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY THE COMMITMENT OF HUNDREDS OF ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL FROM THE REGULAR JANDARMA AND TNP FORCES DURING THE CRITICAL PERIOD FROM MID-MAY TO MID-JUNE WHEN INCISION IS POSSIBLE.

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PAGE 02 ANKARA 02643 031114Z

B. PRICE TO BE PAID FARMERS. DAG SAID THAT THE PRICE TO BE

PAID FARMERS FOR UNINCISED STRAW MUST BE SET BY A DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT SUCH A DECREE COULD BE PASSED SOMETIME IN APRIL, BUT IN ANY EVENT, IT WOULD HAVE TO EMERGE BEFORE JUNE 15. HE SAID THE SOIL PRODUCTS OFFICE (TMO) PLANS TO PAY THE FARMERS A CASH ADVANCE ON THEIR POPPY CROPS, AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING THEM WITH NECESSARY FINANCING AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO COMPLY WITH THE LAW BANNING INCISION. THE BALANCE WILL BE PAID WHEN THE POPPY STRAW IS DELIVERED.

C. UN ASSISTANCE. DAG NOTED THAT THE VEHICLES AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT BEING PROVIDED BY THE UN SHOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE GOT'S POPPY CONTROL PROGRAM. HE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON THE RECENT EMBLAD/KATZ MISSION IN CONNECTION WITH THE UN PROGRAM. HE STRESSED THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS ON THE FARMERS WHICH WOULD BE PRODUCED BY THE HIGHLY VISIBLE PRESENCE IN THE POPPY FIELDS OF INSPECTION TEAMS EQUIPPED WITH JEEPS AND MODERN RADIO EQUIPMENT.

D. ALKALOID FACTORY. DAG SAID THAT TMO HAD REISSUED INVITATIONS DIRECTLY TO INTERESTED FIRMS FOR BIDS ON CONSTRUCTION OF THE ALKALOID FACTORY, WITH A NEW DEADLINE OF JUNE 2. THE TURKS WERE NOT RPT NOT ROUBLED BY THE WORLD BANK'S BEING UNWILLING TO PROVIDE FINANCING FOR THE ALKALOID FACTORY, AND HAD NOT RPT NOT REALLY EXPECTED THE BANK TO DO SO, ALTHOUGH THE GOT APPRECIATED THE UN'S EFFORTS IN THIS MATTER.

E. PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. DAG REITERATED THE GOT'S CONCERN OVER STATEMENTS BY DEA OFFICIALS CRITICAL OF TURKEY, AND BEMOANED THE GOT'S LACK OF AN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC INFORMATION PROGRAM TO EXPLAIN TURKEY'S POSITION TO THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

F. IN A GENERAL OBSERVATION, DAG SAID THAT THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, IHSAN SABRI CAGLAYANGIL, HAD A REPUTATION AS A SUPPORTER OF THE US AND NATO AND WAS NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO INTRODUCE MAJOR CHANGES IN TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY. HOWEVER, DAG CONTINUED, THESE ARE EXTRAORDINARY TIMES AND NO RPT NO TURKISH GOVERNMENT COULD AFFORD TO BE AS OPENLY IN FAVOR OF THE US AS IT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE.

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